



# PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY (ELC)

## 1 PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Minaret College Early Learning Centres to:

- provide a safe environment for all children which ensures their safety, health and wellbeing
- promote the cultural safety and culture of all children
- identify, reduce and remove risks of child abuse, and intervene when a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect
- make staff aware of their legal and duty of care obligations to report child abuse and neglect

Minaret College is committed to the rights of all children to feel safe, taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, whilst also promoting their learning and development.

## 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Minaret College ELCs, including during offsite excursions and activities.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Minaret College Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Empowerment of Children Policy.

## 3 PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management Control are responsible for:

- providing leadership for an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved
- advising staff of current child protection legislation, and their legal and duty of care obligations (Regulation 84)
- undertaking child safety reviews and developing an action plan in consultation with staff, parents/guardians and children to maintain Child Safe Standards at Minaret College ELCs
- conducting recruitment and induction processes for staff in line with this policy

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- ensuring that contractors, volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other visitors to the service are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- ensuring that contact is prevented or responding if it has occurred, when the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child
- ensuring staff, and where appropriate, contractors, volunteers and students undertake appropriate training on child safety, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse, knowing how to respond, and understanding responsibilities and processes for reporting (refer to Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure)
- ensuring procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect are promoted across the service and regularly reviewed in partnership with staff and parents/guardians, and where appropriate contractors, volunteers, students and children
- offering support to the child and their family, and to staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Minaret College ELCs
- maintaining co-operative relationships with appropriate services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST) in the best interests of children and their families
- ensuring processes for responding to and reporting are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of a child at the service
- notifying DET within 24 hours of a serious incident or notifiable complaint occurring at the service
- notifying the Commission for Children and Young People within 3 business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation
- investigating an allegation (subject to police clearance on criminal matters or matters involving family violence), advising the Commission for Children and Young People who is undertaking the investigation
- updating the Commission for Children and Young People within 30 calendar days with detailed information about the reportable allegation and any action
- notifying the Commission for Children and Young People of the investigation findings and any disciplinary action taken (or the reasons no action was taken)
- maintaining confidentiality at all times
- reviewing this policy in consultation with staff, volunteers and parents/guardians
- providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- protecting the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making
- ensuring all staff, students, contractors, parents/guardians, volunteers and visitors abide by the Child Safety Code of Conduct

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:

- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- ensuring continuous improvement in the implementation of the Child Safe Standards in Minaret College ELCs promoting an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved

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- ensuring processes for responding to and reporting are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of a child at the service
- notifying the Approved Provider or Person with Management or Control immediately on becoming aware of a concern, complaint or allegation regarding the safety, health and welfare of a child at Minaret College ELCs
- offering support to the child and their family, and to educators and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Minaret College ELCs
- making all staff aware of this policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct and the Interactions with Children Policy and holding them to account for the behavioural expectations identified
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider or Person with Management or Control, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians and children
- planning so that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, volunteer, student, parent/guardian or visitor, at the service.

All staff are responsible for:

- fulfilling their legal responsibilities and duty of care to protect children and to keep children safe and to maintain their rights
- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- contributing to an organisational culture of child safety
- following processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (refer to Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure)
- undertaking appropriate training on child protection, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse knowing how to respond, and understanding responsibilities and processes for reporting
- supporting the maintenance of Child Safe Standards in Minaret College ELC in consultation with the Approved Provider and Person with Management Control and Nominated Supervisor and Person in day to day Charge at the service
- notifying the Nominated Supervisor, Person in day to day Charge, the Approved Provider or the Person with Management Control immediately on becoming aware of any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the safety, health and welfare of a child at Minaret College ELC
- offering support to the child and their family in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Minaret College ELC
- co-operating with other services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST) in the best interests of children and their families
- conducting activities so that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, visitor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian at the service
- maintaining confidentiality at all times
- contributing to a review of this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, Person with Management Control, Nominated Supervisor and Person in day to day Charge
- educating and empowering children to talk about events and situations that make them feel uncomfortable

- ensuring that children at the service are not subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- using appropriate resources and undertaking training to assist with the implementation of this policy
- abiding by the service's Child Safe Code of Conduct and Interactions with Children Policy.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reporting any concerns regarding child safety or wellbeing to the Nominated Supervisor
- abiding by the service's Code of Conduct.

#### **4 EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, Minaret College will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required

Approved Provider PR-00002074

Early Learning Centres: Officer (SE-00011878) and Springvale (SE-40013883)

#### **DOCUMENT CONTROL**

Doc ID: ELC-POL-007

Version 1.2

Reviewed: March 2022

Approved: October 2018